

Pacific Crossings

The official newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group

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Briefs

Clothing needed for abuse awareness drive

April is the national awareness month for sexual assault, child abuse and alcohol abuse. 624th RSG members who would like to donate clothing items to benefit The Windward Women's Shelter should bring them to the May Unit Training Assembly. Items needed are:

- New and used clothing for women and children
- New undergarments for women and children
- Diapers
- Hygiene Products
- There is a *special need* for boys' clothing, ages 10-14

May is National Asian/Pacific American Month

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated in May to commemorate the contributions of people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the United States.

Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution in 1978 to commemorate Asian American Heritage Week during the first week of May. This date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (by many Chinese laborers) on May 10, 1869. Congress later voted to expand the celebration from a week to a month.

Hue's humanitarian Aid



Courtesy photo

Tech. Sgt. Carl Hillen checks a local boy's vitals while taking part in a humanitarian aid mission in Vietnam in mid-March. Sergeant Hillen is a 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron medical technician.

Mission to Vietnam first for 624th RSG

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Schaap
624th Regional Support Group
Public Affairs

Day one left him "catatonic." Physically and emotionally drained, Maj. Kurt Nishiguchi just stared off into space. Four more days of assembly-line dentistry awaited him and his first day on the job was no picnic. It wouldn't get much easier. More than 700 patients later, his office consisted of a plastic lawn chair and some flashlights.

Maj. Nishiguchi is an Air Force Reserve dentist. In mid-March, he and nine other of his fellow 624th Regional Support Group members

volunteered to support an Aloha Medical and Civil Engineering Mission in the Imperial City of Hue, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. They were part of a 45-member team consisting of surgeons, dentists, hygienists, nurses, civil engineers and support personnel from Pacific Air Forces, the U.S. Navy and Army, the East Meets West Foundation based in Vietnam, and the Aloha Medical Mission in Honolulu.

The tri-service, civilian-military project treated more than 3,000 people and performed more than 10,000 procedures in Hue and surrounding villages. Huge crowds as-

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Commander's Comments

Why Patriot Force is Important

By Col. Pamela Milligan
624th Regional Support Group
Commander

As we prepare for another Patriot Force exercise, testing our mobility and ATSO wartime skills, many of us are certainly thinking, "Enough already." It was one thing exercising our readiness/mobility machine annually when we were not actually mobilizing and deploying for every AEF rotation. But under the current tempo, where 624th RSG members are on the road in support of every AEF cycle, the question, "Doesn't real world experience matter?" is valid.

The truth is that rather than improve readiness, the dramatic increase in the use of America's military has a detrimental effect on combat readiness. The current operations tempo places a significant strain on people and equipment, which can actually erode rather than enhance readiness. One reason for this decline in readiness is exactly what Patriot Force is intended to combat...lax or reduced training during periods of multiple and persistent commitments. Training is a key component of readiness.

My job is to ensure the readiness of every member of this Group, and fundamentally, the peacetime mission of each of our units. Patriot Force ensures that, while supporting con-

tingencies, each of us remains trained and ready for our missions.

On a more personal level, it demonstrates that each of you, when tasked to deploy, have the skills and knowledge to do your job and then return to your families safely. Putting our life on the line for the country is what we have signed up to do. If a little extra training and push to be wartime ready ensures you come back alive, then so much the better.

Another reason for eroded readiness during high ops tempo is decreased morale. I can honestly say I do not see evidence of that around here. We are tired, but we are happy Airmen. I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your perseverance and absolute dedication to the mission. Because you are AFRC's greatest asset, a ready operational Reserve requires a bright, well-trained, and highly motivated force. There is no doubt you are the brightest and most motivated Reservists in the Command. Bar none.

For this weekend, keep smiling. It will not be a perfect exercise. They never are. But remember the goal...honed wartime skills and undeniable readiness. Remember that safety is mission essential. Be safe so that we can return you to your families and civilian employers better for the experience. Mahalo Nui Loa.

Action Line

The Action Line is your direct line to the 624th Regional Support Group Commander, Col. Pamela Milligan.

If you have worked through normal channels and are not satisfied with the answer, the Action Line is your opportunity to ask questions or make suggestions about the subjects of concern to the 624th RSG community.

You may contact us via E-mail at:
rsgactionline@hickam.af.mil.

Please include your name and phone number in case more specific information is required.

Action Lines of general interest will be published in *Pacific Crossings*; others will be answered by phone.

Remember, the quickest and most efficient way to solve a problem is to talk directly to the office that is responsible. This gives them a chance to help you and perhaps improve the process.

Contact us at
rsgactionline@hickam.af.mil



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To submit an article or story idea, call (808) 448-0919 or send e-mail to daniel.nathaniel@hickam.af.mil or jennifer.chamberlin@hickam.af.mil

Submission deadline is the Friday two weeks prior to the next UTA. The newsletter reserves the right to edit all submissions to journalistic standards. Acceptance of inputs by the public affairs staff does not guarantee publication.

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Separation ages change for officers

WASHINGTON — If otherwise eligible, Air Force Reserve officers can now stay in the service longer before reaching their mandatory separation age.

In the past, brigadier generals and below had to retire or separate when they reached age 60. Now they can stay until age 62. The age for major generals rose from 62 to 64.

These changes are a result of provisions in the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act.

With the approval from the secretary of the Air Force, chaplains and officers in some health

professions may remain in an active status until age 67.

Eligible officers still have the option of voluntarily separating or retiring before their mandatory age.

Additionally, mandatory separation dates because of years of commissioned service restrictions have not changed. Unless otherwise continued, lieutenant colonels must separate or retire when reaching 28 years of commissioned service. The limit for colonels is 30 years.

Although the authorization act changed mandatory separation ages, it did not change when officers become eligible to draw retirement

pay. If they meet all other requirements for retirement, they may apply for retired pay upon reaching age 60.

Also unchanged is the requirement for an individual to request approval from the secretary of the Air Force to continue to receive service credit for any service performed once becoming qualified for retired pay, which typically occurs at age 60.

More information and a list of frequently asked questions are available at: <http://arpc.afrc.af.mil/separations/msd.asp> (Air Force Reserve Command News Service)

Reservists required to update employer info

Providing employer information has been a mandatory requirement since April 3, 2003. Department of Defense policy requires a Civilian Employer Information program that maintains current and accurate civilian employment related information on each member of the Ready Reserve, to include Air Force Reserve members and both participating and non-participating Individual Ready Reservists. The purpose for collecting CEI Program information is to:

- a. Achieve fair treatment between members in the Ready Reserve who are being considered for recall to active duty without their consent.
- b. Ensure that there will be no significant attrition of the Ready Reserve members or units during a mobilization and;
- c. To inform Reserve Component members and their employers of their rights, benefits, and obligations under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

The Air Force Reserve must identify, collect, and report the following data on each member:

- a. Employer's name
- b. Employer's complete mailing address
- c. Member's current civilian job title
- d. Total years experience in civilian occupation

Group members may enter their employer data by going to the Defense Manpower Data Center Web site located at:

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal>.

After clicking on the Web site, enter your employment status. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve staff will not directly contact any employer about an individual reservist unless the reservist asks for assistance with an employer issue.

It is the duty of each individual member of the Ready Reserve to comply with these requirements. A member of the Ready Reserve who knowingly fails or refuses to provide required employment-related information or who knowingly provides false employment-related information may be subject to administrative action or punishment for dereliction of duty under Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice.

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal>

2007 Annual Award Winners



**Master Sergeant
Daniel Stone
Senior NCO of the Year**

Master Sgt. Daniel Stone, First Sergeant for the 724th Aeromedical Staging Flight, is recognized as the “premier performer” from the pool of 110 senior NCO’s attached to the 624th RSG.

“Take charge of your career,” Master Sgt. Stone said. “Don’t wait for someone else to map it out for you, you are your own best career manager.”

“Grow your replacement, do not lock yourself into your own little comfort zone. Accept new challenges, and always be honest enough with yourself to know that you may not have all the answers, then be strong enough to ask the questions.”

Being assigned as the “first” First Sergeant to the 724th ASTF, marking his first full year in that position, receiving the Commandants Award from the First Sergeants Academy and being selected as the Senior NCO of the Year for the 624th RSG rank as the proudest military accomplishments for Sergeant Stone this year.



**Staff Sergeant
Tammy Castro
NCO of the Year**

Staff Sgt. Tammy Castro, 724th Aeromedical Staging Flight, advises younger troops “regardless of the challenges that you may be faced with, stay strong, stay focused and never give up.”

Sergeant Castro credits her husband for helping her accomplish the award.

“I thank my husband, Eric Jon Castro,” Sergeant Castro said. “Without his amazing support for my military career, I would never have been able to come this far. He understands the sacrifices that I go through, juggling military duties, civilian job, children, school and household duties. I must also give credit to Tech. Sgt. Doris Leon Guerrero, who is the back bone of our unit. She provided me guidance and gave me the tools for success. And of course my First Shirt, Master Sgt. Daniel Stone. He constantly reminds me of how “outstanding” I really am. His encouragement, support, and esprit de corps has helped me accomplish this award.”



**Senior Airman
Brandon Arredondo
Airman of the Year**

Senior Airman Brandon Arredondo, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, believes that having a positive attitude, being proactive and giving every task your all is essential to progressing in your Air Force Reserve career.

“There are a lot of people who help me accomplish this award,” Senior Airman Arredondo said. “Just to name a few I would like to thank Master Sgt. Ganigan, Master Sgt. Aragon-Lim, Master Sgt. Littlejohn, Senior Master Sgt. Takushi, Tech. Sgt. Rieta and everybody else that helped me. You know who you are.”

Senior Airman Arredondo was deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Horn of Africa operations in 2006.

“This Year in its entirety is an accomplishment in itself and I could not have done it without the support of my friends and family,” said Senior Airman Arredondo.

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Award Winners continued



**Major
Charles Tilton
FGO of the Year**

Some people know Maj. Charles Tilton, 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, by the name “Monk.” Not because of his religion, but because he takes organization, planning and perfection in his duties and responsibilities to the same religious level as the main character of the television show “Monk.”

“But I’m not a fanatic” he quipped.

He is strongly dedicated and committed to the Air Force’s core values and leads by example.

“Not that I have a big following or anything, but hopefully some of it will rub off,” he said. “Ho’onui ka maika’i” (our squadron motto) is what we should always be doing — literally “making better the good,” or always seeking to improve what we do.”

Major Tilton is not one to settle for “satisfactory.”

“Kulia i ka nu’u” — strive for the highest!” he urged.

That is what has made him a successful nurse, both in the Air Force Reserve and in his civilian job.



**Captain
Jerelyn Pedrina-Schiessel
CGO of the Year**

It was seven years ago, but it was a lesson Capt. Jerelyn Pedrina-Schiessel remembers vividly. She was at the Captain’s Course in Alabama, staring at a large hurdle that was the culmination of a tiring confidence course.

“You can do it,” a colonel said to her. Sopping wet, worn out and brand new to the military, she was not so sure. But the colonel stayed with her and wouldn’t let her give up. He went over, she went with him. That’s the example Captain Pedrina-Schiessel tries to set now. Don’t doubt yourself, she said, even when things look impossible.

She’s been an Air Force Reserve nurse for seven years. She’s been a civilian nurse for 25 years. “You have to enjoy what you do and who you are working with,” she said. “Life is short.”

Captain Pedrina-Schiessel is scheduled to leave for Iraq in May for her first combat deployment. “We train, train, train,” she said. Now is her opportunity for the real deal. She’s been “wanting to go.”

Group Honor Guard seeking volunteers

The 624th RSG is seeking several good men and women to fill much needed positions within their Honor Guard.

Airman historically join the Honor Guard for many reasons. Some enjoy the opportunity to participate in the “fun” details such as presenting the colors at local events, change-of-command and retirement ceremonies and parades.

Many other people want to be in the Honor Guard because they simply believe in the program.

They think it is important that they can give back to those who have lost their lives in combat, or to those who served honorably generations ago.

Members who are interested in volunteering must be in compliance with AFI 36-2903, Dress and Appearance of Air Force Personnel, and AFI 10-248, Fitness Program. Honor Guard members are often in the spotlight, and must be ambassadors for the 624th RSG.

Above and beyond the feeling of pride and accomplishment that comes along with being a member in the Honor Guard, there are a few perks that all members receive as well.

All uniforms are provided to Airmen in the Honor Guard. Members also receive reserved parking at the BX and commissary and special write-ups for performance reports and award nominations.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Honor Guard, please contact **Technical Sergeant Emily Aguilar at 448-3566**. Your unit needs you.

SPOTLIGHT ON ...



Tara Corse

Technical Sergeant,
624th Regional Support Group

Reserve Job: 48th APS First Sergeant
Civilian Job: Explosive Detection K-9 handler for the Honolulu International Airport
Hometown: Worcester, MA
What do you do for fun?
 Ride my KTM Supermoto
What is your favorite color? Yellow
What is your favorite food?
 Anything from a carnival

What is your pet peeve? The little balls that form on fitted sheets

Where do you see yourself in five years...ten years?

Handing out Chief Coins

Favorite TDY location? Anywhere in Europe along the Mediterranean

What is your favorite movie? Dumb and dumber...no, really

Why did the chicken cross the road? He was picking up FOD

What famous celebrities have you met? Chief Wong and Cher (not together)

John Kim

Technical Sergeant,
624th Regional Support Group

Reserve Job: LAN Manager

Civilian Job: I recently resigned from the Honolulu Police Department and used to be a law breaker, now I guess I am a law abider...and of course, now a LAN Manager.

Hometown: Honolulu, HI

What do you do for fun? Just about anything, I am a spontaneous fella...I like to work out at the gym, go hiking, fishing etc.

What is your favorite color? Blue! And no, not because it's the Air Force answer.

What is your favorite food? A 22 ounce Rib Eye steak! The next best thing would be a nice cold draft at some "Broke da Mouth" poke!

What is your pet peeve? When people install a toilet paper roll so that the tissue unwraps from the under side of the roll.

Where do you see yourself in five years...ten years? Alive. I live my life day-to-day, I have tried to plan my life out, but things have always seemed to change. Three years ago I saw myself climbing up the ranks within the police department...Three years later, I was afforded the opportunity to work with the 624th RSG.

Favorite TDY location? I would have to say Thailand...Need I elaborate? Nah, it is a country rich in heritage and culture, I admire that.

Why did the chicken cross the road? Give me five minutes with the chicken and I'll find out...He said if he stopped he would be dead.



FIT TO FIGHT

90 PERCENT

AND ABOVE CLUB

Master Sgt. Marilyn Kinoshita*

Tech. Sgt. Emily Aguilar

Col. Pamela Milligan

1st Lt. Siul Michel*

Staff Sgt. Elo Badua

Tech Sgt. Raul Baybayan

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Elvenia

Tech. Sgt. Felix Fernandez

Staff Sgt. Jessie Garo

Staff Sgt. Albert Keomaka

Staff Sgt. Gene Kridler

Master Sgt. Jennifer Lum

Senior Airman Nia Naumu

Senior Airman Crisanto Vida

Senior Airman Sean Warnet*

Chief Master Sgt. Brian Wong

2nd Lt. Janet Agcaoili

Senior Airman Napoleon Gombio

Airman 1st Class Nicolas Lucas

Master Sgt. Tina Maciejewski

Senior Airman Laurence Orr

Col. Gayle Seifullin

Major Charles Tilton*

Major Jennifer Surwatanabe

* denotes members who scored
100 percent

HICKAM UTA DATES

May 5,6

Jun 2,3

Jul 7,8

Aug 4,5

ANDERSEN UTA DATES

May 19,20

Jun 16,17

Jul 21,22

Aug 18,19

KUWAIT



Staff Sgt. Michelle Quichocho uses a 10K loader to move cargo to be shipped from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, into Iraq. Sergeant Quichocho is a 44th Aerial Port Squadron member currently assigned to the 386th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron at Camp Arifjan. In the last three months, the 44th APS cargo team has moved 8,248 short tons of inbound cargo and baggage and 12,402 short tons of outbound cargo and baggage. "The entire 44th APS team is doing an awesome job over here, but (we) are looking forward to coming home next month," said Capt. Carla Lugo, 44th APS Readiness Officer and 386th ELRS Deputy Commander.



QATAR

Staff Sgt. Suzarah Velasco helps a fellow Airman with some paperwork while assigned to the 379th ELRS/LGRM at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Sergeant Velasco is a 624th Civil Engineer Squadron member. Her squadron at Al Udeid serves as a focal point for all wing logistics processes. She is responsible for vehicle management, cargo and passenger movement, general supplies, critical aircraft spares, equipment, all petroleum products, cryogenics and deployment/reception planning all while providing supply, transportation, fuels, and logistics plans support for coalition forces.

Courtesy photo



(Left) Senior Airman George Repollo uses one of the few tools his civil engineer team was able to locate for help with their humanitarian aid mission in Vietnam. Airman Repollo is a 624th CES structural journeyman. (Opposite page) Group members learned how hard life is for many of the people they helped in Vietnam. Many complained that most parts of their body ached from years of labor-intensive work. A local mayor talked with the 624th's engineers about ways to build dwellings for about a thousand people who live on their river boats.

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sembled when word spread that American medical personnel had returned to help people. Tech. Sgt. Carl Hillen, 724th ASTS medical technician, estimated his team assessed more than 200 people a day.

Because of a major lack in oral hygiene education, dentists found their services in very high demand. Waiting areas were packed, mainly with children brought by their parents. It wasn't uncommon for children to sneak in when a door opened. "It was like we were giving away free TVs," Major Nishiguchi said.

It was in the villages that the team found resources scarcest. "There was no water for me to wash my hands," Major Nishiguchi said. "I'd change gloves and move on to the next patient, one after another."

Despite the incredibly "intense" work environment, Maj. Nishiguchi would raise his hand to do it again. Patients sitting in plastic lawn chairs and staring at their teeth with flashlights are what he had in mind when he offered his services to the Air Force three years ago. "I wanted to do missions like this," he said.

Lt. Col. Deric Wong, 624th RSG

Deputy Commander, said removing Airmen from their comfort zone was one of the main reasons the Group's leadership wanted to participate in the mission. Not only do such missions help build relationships with people of other countries, they help break the mentality that work stops when the computers are down.

"What happens when you don't

have an MRI or EKG machine?" Lt. Col. Wong asked, referring to what often happens when the military medicals meet real-world situations.

The three 624th Civil Engineer Squadron members who went on the mission found out what happens when a concrete classroom floor needs to be demolished without the aid of technology. They broke out



Courtesy photo

Facilities and tools were easier to come by for Maj. Kurt Nishiguchi (left) and his dental team when they were in the city. But his office was reduced to a plastic lawn chair and a flashlight when he travelled to the local villages. Major Nishiguchi is a 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron dentist.

the sledge hammer (only one was available for rent) and rolled up their sleeves. "We became strong when we were there," CES' Senior Master Sgt. Rondald Belong modestly joked. Removing the floor took more than a day.

Sgt. Belong's small CES team did not know

what work was needed and what resources would be available until they arrived in Hue. "They literally walked into the schoolyard and assessed the project right then and there," Colonel Wong said. "They did a great job."

Capt. Richard Yenke, 624th ASTS biomedical technician, was surprised to find a hospital he was assigned to had equipment as good as or better than that found in the United States. The hospital's problem was not outdated technology; it was fixing the equipment when it broke. Vietnam's customs and tax laws make it very difficult to order replacement parts and force Vietnamese engineers to think outside the box when something breaks.

"They are very creative," Captain Yenke said. "I learned more from them then they did from me."

Translators helped bridge the communication and cultural gap with the Vietnamese. When he wasn't showing

hospital workers how to vacuum dust and dirt out of equipment to prevent break down, Captain Jenke was answering questions about his Air Force uniform and what he did on the weekends in the United States.

"Every place we went people would want to know about us,"

said Staff Sgt. Leonard Fontanilla, 624th ASTS medical technician. Sergeant Fontanilla was part of the mission's initial assessment team. Translators helped him find out why patients had come, but some things needed no translation. "They really live a hard life," the Honolulu-native said. "Every part of their body aches."

Feeling appreciated by the Vietnamese people was not an issue, some of whom had never seen aspirin before. Little things, Sergeant Fontanilla said, like giving children a coloring book, made their day.

George O'Brien, a U.S. Army foreign affairs officer who attended a closing ceremony for the mission, summed up the gratitude of those helped in the words of a young Vietnamese translator: "Your positive actions taught us what aloha means. Come again soon and work close beside your many new friends."

